THE
HAND-BOOK OF TASTE:

OR,

HOW TO OBSERVE WORKS OF ART,

ESPECIALLY

CARTOONS, PICTURES, AND STATUES.

BY

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NOTICE

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PREFACE.

A PROPOSITION has been made to decorate the New Houses of Parliament with productions of British Art. The Parliament has assented, and has appointed a committee for the purpose of furthering the object proposed. Nothing can be fairer or better adapted for that purpose than the instructions issued by that committee. No test can exhibit the capacities of an artist so fairly and truly as the production of a cartoon.* But those cartoons are, as is right, to be submitted to public inspection in Westminster Hall; and if the Public be intelligent and capable of judging,

* A cartoon means a chalk drawing upon paper. The word is adopted from the Italian *cartone*, a large piece of paper.

they will exercise a most useful influence upon the decisions of that committee; for in the multitude of counsellors there *is* wisdom. High lineage and noble birth give wealth, but not intellectual richness. The poet's chaplet and the peer's coronet are not of necessity identical; nor is good taste always prominent in those to whom the world's worldly favours are most freely accorded. The minority, who do understand, may want the assistance of public opinion to make them a majority. Even foreign taste, in all probability better than our own upon such matters, may not regret that it is backed by an enlightened public opinion, if it should have to encounter ignorant prejudice.

It is, then, for the instruction of the Public that this little work has been compiled. It does not contain the opinions of one individual, but those of the best artists and best critics of all ages — such as Da Vinci, Winkelmann, Mengs, Milizia,

Lessing, and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Much is translated from Milizia; and it is believed that there is no one maxim in the book for which authority may not be found in the writings of Sir Joshua — only his object was to teach the young student how to become a good artist, mine to instruct the observer how to distinguish one.

Experience has shown that he did not succeed. Why not? Because the public taste was unable to appreciate works in the grand style, which he therefore himself deserted. It has not advanced much from his time to our own. Partially perhaps it has receded, while that of other countries has advanced with giant steps. England, in her arts of design, is immeasurably behind what Italy has been, and, notwithstanding our unwillingness to confess it, what France aspires to, and Germany has accomplished. But is she incapable of progress? We shall see.

THE

HAND-BOOK OF TASTE.

INTRODUCTION.

1. THE earliest productions of imitative art pretended to nothing but a certain degree of manual dexterity; and even this was at first so rude and imperfect, that the artist felt himself obliged to inscribe upon his work the name of the object intended to be represented, in order to make it recognisable. But, as he was his own commentator, no exertion was required of the observer, beyond the making use of his eyes, to enable him to judge of the resemblance, which was all that was aimed at.

2. When these imitations were sufficiently true and correct to speak for themselves without comment or inscription, a great step was gained; yet, as the objects represented were single figures and simple subjects, the whole aim of the artist being still confined to the mere attempt of producing an exact copy of the original he imitated, every person was equally capable of appreciating their merits or defects, without any other assistance than that which a correct eye naturally afforded.

3. In process of time men were no longer content with the mere representation of what was constantly before their eyes; and the artist then took higher ground. He began to embellish and improve upon the model which nature afforded him, by selecting only such subjects as were more perfect than the rest, correcting the faulty parts of his original, or substituting others from more chosen specimens. Still his appeal

was not to the understanding, but to the sight. If that received gratification, his object was gained; and though something more would be required of the spectator to fit him for a judge, yet his eye would easily obtain the power of distinguishing defects from beauties by a little observation and practice.

4. But when the arts attained their highest grade of perfection — when they required the greatest stretch of genius for their production — when they laid, as it were, all the sciences under contribution, by making each contribute to their use — when they strove to depict emotions, passions, and sentiments; to portray virtue and vice, nobility and dignity, grace and elegance, truth and justice — when they became the records and chronicles of persons and events — when they resorted to the artifice of composition, chiaroscuro, and colouring, in order to enhance the effect they sought to produce — when, in short,

they were employed, as we propose to employ them, as a fitting decoration for the building whence shall emanate the laws of an empire within whose limits the sun never sets,—it is clear that the artist had a higher calling than the paperhanger or upholsterer, and that an aim so insignificant as that of mere visual gratification could never be the real object of his attainment.

5. The sight of any thing beautiful pleases us; but that pleasure ought not to end there: it ought to procure us some positive benefit. Real pleasures are fertile in utility; those which bear no fruit are vain, silly, and deceptious. What would an elegant architectural decoration be, if it merely served to please the eye without any ulterior purpose?—an idle outlay of time and money. Nature has furnished us with wants, thence to provide us with pleasures; to procure us, in short, by means of these wants, some great

and positive advantage. By the path of beauty she would lead us on to the temple of virtue.

6. We observe that Nature embellishes certain objects in order to render them more desirable, and deforms others to make them less attractive. Why is the hemlock offensive to the smell, the scorpion loathsome to the sight? That we may not be enticed to taste the one, or touch the other. Why is beauty an attendant upon youth instead of age? Clearly for our good. Flowers blossom for the fruits they bear. It is well to feel that what is most beautiful is best, and the most conducive to our interest; and to know that man will never err while he pursues the same course which nature does. His art is intended as a source of gratification; but that gratification will be fallacious, unless it is beneficial; and it cannot be beneficial unless it strives to render us wiser or better than we are, by attaching us to those objects which are the most

beautiful, and, at the same time, the most pregnant with utility.

7. He who first designated the arts of design by the name of *fine arts* (*beaux arts*) must have felt this truth, and known that their spirit consisted in the union of beauty with utility, for the purpose of embellishing all the common necessaries which administer to our every-day wants. The first savage who, in building his hut, knew how to keep proportions adapted to convenience and solidity, invented architecture. The first shepherd who beautified the shape of his flask, or cut out certain figures on his staff, was the inventor of sculpture. And the damsel who delineated the outlines of her lover's shadow with a piece of burnt stick upon the wall invented painting.

8. The essential duty of the fine arts, is, therefore, to place those objects which are subjected to the senses in such a light as shall cause them to act upon us with extraordinary energy.

A painting does not deserve to pass for a picture ; a house is not a production of architecture ; nor is a block of marble to be called a statue,— unless the work of the artist possesses beauty of such description that it attracts and rivets our attention by means of the pleasure which it gives us. Nor is this enough. That pleasure must be fruitful of utility and instruction. Without such an object, the Parnassus would be nothing but vanity and seduction. By presenting us with specimens of perfection, these arts ought to render us more perfect. By giving us good taste, choice, and order, they prepare us for an improved existence. They are, or should be, the eloquent records of real moral worth ; the charming guides which lead us on towards honour, glory, virtue, by ennobling and beautifying all that is great and good ; whilst they make vice hideous, to make it the more detestable. It was with this intent that Cicero

wished to present a beautiful image of Virtue to his son, in order that he might become enamoured of her; for beauty is the mainspring of real moral interest; and it will therefore be the triumph of art to consecrate the enchantment of its graces to the two greatest blessings which can befall mankind — truth and virtue. This *is* its final scope, this its noblest attainment.

9. Hence it follows, that a painter who only knows how to colour, if he colours well has made himself master of a difficult craft, and deserves such praise as you would bestow upon a good workman; but he is not an artist.

10. A painter who invents, composes, and colours subjects which are pretty and pleasing enough in themselves, but produce no effect upon the mind, nor any result beyond the visual gratification of the observer, merits undoubtedly the first rank amongst decorators; but he is not an artist.

11. But the painter who represents ideas exalted, just, and noble, in such a manner as to transmit them from the canvass into the breasts of those who behold it, and to excite in them the emotions, thoughts, affections, or antipathies with which he is himself inspired,—he *is* an artist, equal in all respects to the first of orators, poets, or historians.

12. If this be true, as true it undoubtedly is, it will be readily conceded that the vision, unaided by education or other intellectual endowments, is no longer a sufficient guide to the spectator, when he is called upon to examine the highest productions of art. An ignorant or illiterate person cannot appreciate, because he cannot understand, the writings of Homer, Shakspeare, or Milton. How, then, can he pretend to judge of works which contain not only the same elements as the finest page of poetry, but some others peculiar to themselves? All the

senses are improved and refined by education. We know that the blind acquire by practice a delicacy of touch which enables them to read with the fingers. An uncultivated ear knows certainly what music pleases it; but it cannot enjoy the highest efforts of musical composition. Even the palate is improved—nay, made sensible of gratifications previously unknown—by practice and experience. We frequently hear people say "they don't like French cooking." Neither does the savage of North America. They deceive themselves. What they dislike is bad French cooking; it is the English imitation of it, or the examples afforded by imperfect practitioners. But no civilised person can object to have his food presented to him in a form which captivates the eye, and entices the appetite, without loading the stomach.

13. The vision likewise must be taught to discriminate by study, practice, and observation.

If Raphael had been born and bred in a country village, he could have had no conceptions of beauty or grandeur beyond what he saw in the rustic life around him. So the person whose knowledge of art is limited to what he has seen on the walls of the exhibition, finds himself unable to appreciate all at once the merits of the works on the other side of the building. Real merit, whether artistic, or of whatever kind, is never obtrusive: its beauties lie not upon the surface; they are not common, therefore not apparent to the common. Like pearls, you must dive to find them; nor can they be distinguished until you have *learned* to discern them. This learning is called Taste.

TASTE.

1. It is pretended that taste is innate, and not to be acquired. Never was there a greater error.

Taste is a standard formed by experience. Taste is knowledge. The organisation which constitutes the disposition of an individual is, no doubt, a gift of nature; and that is bestowed in different degrees upon different persons. There are some whose deficient organisation renders them incapable of acquiring any sort of knowledge, and amongst others that knowledge which constitutes taste in art. But no man was ever born with an originality and maturity of judgment which would enable him to pronounce an accurate opinion upon the merits of any really great production of the pencil or chisel, without previous study. It is easy enough for a government to appoint a committee of taste; but it cannot appoint taste to its committee.

2. Taste, then, is something to be acquired. To acquire it there is a necessity that you should have been endowed by nature with a sense of the Beautiful, and of its various gradations and

kinds. It is true that one man may be more partial to the pathetic, and another to the cheerful, and each of these individuals will designate the objects of his own peculiar predilection by the term beautiful. This difference of inclination arises from a difference in the organs, individual character, age, sex, &c.;—of that there can be no doubt. But there is a generally admitted taste amongst persons of well-regulated minds, and of sufficient experience and education, who for the most part agree upon the grade of preference which should be assigned to all those things which can be submitted to rule and to the test of common sense. And if a perfect uniformity of opinion cannot be obtained even on this point, it arises from the difference of passions, and the prejudices of habit. "Take my eyes," said Argus, "and you will see as I do."

These rules, then, thus generally if not universally admitted, it is the object of these pages to enforce and explain. They make no pretensions to originality. If they did, their utility would be circumscribed; for they would then want authority—that authority which they possess in being the generally received opinions of all men of intelligence, both critics and artists.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

1. The arts of design seek to acquire an influence over the mind by the pleasure which they afford to the sight. Now pleasure is a moderate impression which objects produce upon our organs. If it be too strong, as in looking fixedly upon the sun, it pains us; if too weak, as the harmony of the spheres,—never yet heard by any one,—it is

not felt. Therefore subjects which give us pain, or those which are too trivial or too refined to affect us at all, should never be selected by the artist, unless the skill with which they are treated can remedy the inherent defects of their nature. In the Pitti Palace at Florence there is a picture by Sebastian del Piombo, which represents the martyrdom of Saint Agatha. She stands uncovered in the front of the picture, while two men with red-hot pincers are engaged in tearing from the virgin bosom the tender source whence all mankind receive their earliest nourishment. No one can look upon that figure without feeling a cold sweat start upon his brow. It produces horror, and not pleasure. An old painter of the 14th century, Spinello of Arezzo, represented Lucifer so frightfully ugly amongst the fallen angels, that he was haunted in his dreams by the monster of his own creation. The story says that he was so affected by the

apparition as to lose his intellects, fall sick, and die. This may be a fable; but it has its moral, which is this, — that art ought never to be abused.

2. Allegorical and metaphorical subjects, on the contrary, are unfit, because they are enigmatical, because they possess little or no interest, and therefore cannot, and do not, come home to men's bosoms. It may answer to personify the physical or moral qualities in poetry, which has a language in which to explain itself; but how can sculpture explain its meaning in the statue of a river, or a personification of Britannia or Rome? Even painting, with all the additional resources it possesses beyond sculpture, is unable to do so. A woman of majestic beauty writing in a great book supported on the shoulders of a muscular old man, armed with a scythe, and attended by a Janus on one side, and sea monsters blowing trumpets, and laden with rolls

of parchment, on the other, means what?—Why, History, you are told: but women, and especially pretty ones, are not much accustomed to write histories; and if they do, they do not keep such bad company as old men and Tritons. In reality this picture, which is by Mengs, and in the Vatican, is a fine production; yet no one sincerely feels its effect in his heart. But every one would have felt it on the instant, had it been expressed by images more simple, clear, and instructive.

1. A pleasure becomes more positive, that is, it is increased, in proportion as the object which produces it is more perfect; and an object is said to be perfect when it is neither excessive nor defective in any of those qualities which we conceive it ought to contain, relatively to its destination.

2. This perfection, in reference to the sense

of seeing or of hearing, to sights or to sounds, constitutes what is called *beauty*.

3. Nature never presents us with any one individual uniformly beautiful; we always discover a something either superfluous or defective even in the most beautiful natural productions, and, in like manner, some point of beauty even in the most ill-favoured.

4. A perfect whole, formed by selecting and combining the most beautiful parts from different models, is termed ideal beauty—*beau ideal;* or, more accurately, is said to be an imitation of the beauties of nature, since no part of the selection is imaginary, the whole being faithfully copied from nature. The flowers, the shrubs, the fruits of the field, when transplanted to your garden, and improved by the art of cultivation, no longer present the same appearance which they did when growing wild in their native spinnies,—yet Nature produced them all.

She it is who affords the magazine, ever open and inexhaustible, from which the artist extracts the materials which are suitable to the object he has in view. His copy-book is the face of Nature,—her beauties form the object of his study; and hence the arts devoted to the imitation of those beauties are termed Fine Arts—*Beaux* Arts; and their productions, whether a Venus, a Satyr, an Apollo, a serpent, or a monster, are also termed beautiful, though some are hideous in themselves, when each of such productions contains neither more nor less than it ought to contain consistently with the use for which it was created.

5. The artist who imitated Nature precisely as she is, would fail entirely in his aim. A representation of what is constantly before our eyes is not worth so much trouble. A country lout, betraying in his attitude and countenance the very picture of rustic simplicity, while he

scratches his head to stimulate it for an answer to the plainest question, — a servant girl down on her knees, with sleeves tucked up to the elbows, laboriously employed in scrubbing away at the floor of a room furnished with a couple of straw-bottomed chairs, a deal table of which the legs appear to have a *lien* on the wall, a bandbox of blue paper, and a bed covered with a patchwork quilt, — are, no doubt, quite natural. And when the artist has represented these objects so truly that you feel obliged to listen for the vacant reply, — that you seem to see the flush of perspiration on the housemaid's face, — or fancy for the moment that the counterpane is really made of cotton print, — what have you gained? Would you wish to live in constant intercourse with just such companions at your hearth? — to see the room you occupy bedecked with such materials? Then why do you wish to have them on your walls? No; the real value of art does not

consist in portraying Nature just as she is, but as she might be;—in depicting that which is not of common but uncommon occurrence,—which, in short, is never seen at one time, or united in one object. Hence those employed in reproducing images of mere nature are but copyists; and however much manual labour they may bestow upon these copies of theirs, they certainly do not merit any very great degree of praise. There are cases where they would be even censurable, and most so when the imitation was most perfect and most true. Who can endure the sight of monsters or tortures when so naturally represented as to appear real? If the Laocoon inspired horror, it would immediately cease to be a production of the fine arts; the effect of which, as has been said, must always be to excite emotions of pleasure, be the representation illustrative of what passion or quality it may,—joy, sorrow, majesty, grace, or hatred.

PORTRAITS.

1. According to these principles, it would appear that the profession of portrait-painting is not entitled to rank amongst the fine arts. It is remarkable that the ancients have recorded only one portrait-painter, and that one a female, Lala of Cyzicum. In truth, there is no great merit in it if the portrait be merely a likeness; and there would be a positive demerit if it sinned against the simplicity of nature. Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, had but one eye. An artist who painted his portrait furnished him with a pair of brilliant ones: he was disgraced as the author of an impudent falsehood. The next painter drew him exactly as he was, with only one: he was roughly dismissed for his ungrateful sincerity; for truth, impertinently told, like nakedness, savours of

indecency. A third, more skilful than the rest, took the king in profile: he was praised and rewarded.

2. A portrait, to be really good, should approximate as near as possible to the beau ideal; and this may be accomplished by expressing the likeness of the individual, and making, as it were, his eulogy in the countenance, while every other part of the picture, the accessories, background, effects of light, &c., are composed from beautiful nature.

3. It must possess character and expression; for every living countenance is influenced by some passion, or affection, or character. A countenance without expression is without life.

4. The position chosen must not be capricious, nor fixed by the artist like an academy model; for every individual has a carriage and attitudes peculiar to himself; and when placed in a position which is not natural to him he

feels constrained, looks awkward, and, in fact, caricatures himself.

5. A smile embellishes the countenance, and gives life, grace, vivacity, and sensibility. But what incongruity if the eyes look serious while the mouth is gay!

6. Gaudy apparel and gorgeous ornaments may show the artist's dexterity; but they withdraw attention from the object which wears them, without adding to its beauty: and if out of character, they cheat the beholder. Two countrymen, passing up the Corso at Rome, stopped to examine a collection of pictures, hung out, as is the custom there, upon a wall for sale. Their attention was chiefly fixed by a blazing portrait bedecked with all the colours of the rainbow. After regarding it in silence for some minutes, one said to the other, Che santo è? "What saint is it?" His companion replied, "What saint! Don't you see how bravely he's dressed? To be

sure, then, he's one of the saints of our day, that ride in coaches with four horses, attended by lackeys in fine liveries." When the portrait of the Prince Regent, painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, was first placed in the Vatican, some simple persons fell down upon their knees to pray before it. They took *him* for a saint. A young and beautiful lady asked of her friend the loan of her jewels for some grand entertainment. Her messenger received the following reply: "Tell your mistress, if she will send me her lovely face, I shall be able to do without my precious trinkets."

7. Portraits in masquerade, as nymphs, shepherdesses, goddesses, Greek warriors, or Roman orators, are false portraits, which belie the character instead of bearing it. Fancy the little corporal at Waterloo in Greek armour, with a long spear that cast eight feet of shadow on the ground; or Wellington stark naked, as Castor,

the pugilist and horse-jockey, but with the additional absurdity of a pot-lid in one hand, and a poniard in the other. Even the nursery-maids blush for shame when they think of it.

8. A portrait, therefore, cannot be good unless it gives a faithful representation of its original. But it may do more; and must, if it be entitled to rank amongst the productions of the fine arts. There stands Garrick * between Tragedy and Comedy, like Hercules between Vice and Virtue: the likeness faithful; the figure, we will presume, drawn in one of the happiest of his attitudes; the countenance full of real and beautiful expression,—half serious, half gay, as unwilling to give exclusive preference to either charmer, both of whom he loved so well, and each of whom had assisted alternately in procuring him his greatest triumphs. Such a portrait

* By Sir Joshua Reynolds.

is not a mere likeness; it is biography: it paints a life.

1. It is an error to suppose that delusion, or, in other words, deception,—that is, the cheating us into a belief that the images represented are realities,—forms an object of the fine arts. He who invented and fostered such an idea was deluded and deceived himself. Their productions ought to be immediately recognisable as representations, not of ordinary, but beautiful nature. They have no need of delusion. All they seek is to resemble truth and nature. When Shylock or Othello is made to talk in the sublimest strains of poetry, it is not for the purpose of persuading you that such is the real language of Jews and Moors. When an accomplished actor personates Lear or Richard with the most eloquent gesticulation, studied attitudes, varied intonation of voice, and artful

arrangement of the countenance, you never imagine that kings and princes really so act and speak. In like manner, no sculptor ever sought to persuade you that the marble he had fashioned was a living sentient being of flesh and blood. All he wants is not to destroy that tacit convention which exists between yourself and him that his statue represents the objects he wishes, though what you look upon is only marble or bronze; and he succeeds in this end when he attributes to Nature such properties as are conformable to our notions of her laws and established forms. But no compact can exist unless both the contracting parties read it in the same sense. They must clearly understand each other. It is therefore necessary that the taste of the observer should be on a par with that of the artist: if it lags behind, the artist must degrade his works to suit the capacity he addresses, and then adieu to improvement; if it should outstrip him, he can-

not give satisfaction until he has raised himself to a level with the intelligence of his critics,—and that effort produces great works and great masters.

2. If both parties are equally intelligent, and thoroughly understand each other, they will agree that in every production of the fine arts, and in every part of each production, the beauties of nature are to predominate in the forms, proportions, colouring, accessories,—such as drapery, utensils, architecture, backgrounds of scenery, &c.; and in the final scope of all these, the expression. The labour of the artist is like that of the jeweller, who polishes and sets the gems, which without his aid would only be costly masses of deformity. Horace sets jewels with the pen; Phidias with the chisel; Apelles and Raphael with the pencil.

BEAUTY.

1. Beauty consists in form and colour, but principally the former; because all its higher attributes, such as grace, dignity, expression, depend more upon a combination of forms than of colour, — may, indeed, exist without it; in sculpture, for instance.

2. Forms vary not only according to the different qualities of objects, but also according to the different circumstances in which the same object may be placed. Thus the forms of Apollo can never be those of Hercules; nor ought they to be the same in Hercules the mortal, as in Hercules the deity. Moreover, of whatever description they may be, they should never be ordinary, but always select.

3. The human body, when neither mutilated nor deformed, exhibits on its surface six hundred

and sixty-six parts, including veins, muscles, tendons, nails, and bones. Every one of these parts varies in some respect or other in every individual, just as every leaf on a tree varies in some point from every other. Each of these parts is, therefore, possessed of a form more or less approaching to, or receding from, the standard of beauty. He who has the greatest number of them in most perfection, possesses the greatest natural beauty of form. A statue, on the contrary, composed by selecting from individual nature the choicest example of each one of these six hundred and sixty-six parts, and combining them into a single figure, possesses ideal beauty of form in the most perfect degree. It must, then, be impossible for the sculptor to make even an approximation to this perfection, without a thorough knowledge of external anatomy; nor can the observer appreciate the merits of his works without somewhat of a

similar knowledge, or, at least, unless his eye is accustomed to the simple beauty of forms by observation and practice. He cannot even discern them. Are you incredulous? Then make the experiment. Go and look at the Venus, Apollo, or Apollino. Your eye, if unpractised, will distinguish nothing but the most prominent parts. Close the shutters; move a single light round the figure, and you will see that its entire surface is diversified by a thousand delicate undulations, producing light, shadows, and half tint, each circumscribing and defining some different form which constitutes a component part of the whole. If at the same time an intelligent friend or artist — not a pretender, but one who really knows — explains to you what each of these forms represents, tells you their anatomical name, shows you wherein their beauty of contour consists by comparing them with the same parts in ordinary nature,

you will then begin to understand why the sculptor's art is prized so highly; what are the difficulties he has to surmount; and why it is, and with what truth, that the Greek artists are universally allowed to have excelled all other nations.

4. The painter's case is somewhat different. He can resort to colour as well as form for his effect, and has besides a number of other resources, from which the sculptor is excluded. He, therefore, rarely represents the naked figure; never of necessity, for he can gain his end without it. Historical subjects are more naturally depicted, more consonant with our ideas and customs, when the figures are appropriately dressed. Raphael, you will say, seldom painted nudities; all his greatest works are in costume. Most true. But if Raphael had been unable to draw the naked figure like a master, could he have succeeded as he has done in a draped

one? Besides, there are subjects which require the exposure of certain parts of the body, as the torso, legs, arms, and those stumbling-blocks to bad draughtsmen, the extremities, hands and feet: the last perfected after the revival of art, because the most difficult. How can they be well expressed unless the easier have been first mastered?

5. The painter, then, must also have a *sufficient* knowledge of anatomy; but that knowledge is not to be ostentatiously displayed. He must remember, and the public with him, that it is only a means which conduces to an end; that he does not paint to instruct the students of an hospital; not for one, but every class of his fellow-creatures.

6. Connected with form, the beauty of man, the most beautiful object in creation, consists in the external manifestation of his best qualities: his health, which shows itself in the complexion,

and in the form of his members, particularly the countenance; his strength, which announces itself by the developement of the muscles, the frame of the chest, the breadth of shoulders, and agility of the legs; his temperament, which is recognised by his bearing, by the composure of his attitudes, and the propriety of his gestures; in the tranquillity of his brow; and in his intelligence, which declares itself at the eyes

7. All these properties are more delicate and more gentle in the female sex; which, in addition, possesses a certain charm in the mouth and glance, and, more than all these, that modesty, the very essence of sweetness, which is always so pleasing, even when least expected.

8. In beautiful nature there exists a continual variety; nothing is ever repeated in the same individual; but the whole figure is composed of the concave, convex, or abrupt, arranged in such a manner as to produce cutlines variously undulated.

There is no angle without a curve, and no curve without interruption or inflexion; that is to say, all is serpentine, like the flame, or the waves of the sea; so that a concave form is never opposed to a similar one, nor a convex to another convexity, and there is no line on the same side of the same proportions and character as that which is opposed to it on the other. Convexities give size: concavities lightness; and straight lines nobility. In short, there is a continued variety in all the contours, and in all the proportions; and whoever seeks to attain grace without these varieties falls into coldness and mannerism.

MANNERISM.

1. Manner is that peculiarity of thought and execution which distinguishes one artist from another. It is this which enables you, without the aid of a catalogue, when you enter the

Exhibition to say at once, that is by Prout, that by Hunt, that by Turner, that by Etty, and so on. Now this manner, however perfect it may be according to our own notions of perfection, is yet always defective to a certain extent, because it is not an exact representation of beautiful nature, but the artist's modification of her: hence it follows that the more you have of the individual artist in his works, the less you have of nature; — she recedes exactly in the same proportion as he becomes prominent. When a certain person said to Rivarol, "Je vous dirai ma manière de penser," he replied, "Dites-moi la pensée, mais sans manière."

2. The less this manner is apparent, the more perfect will be the work. When excessive, it is called *mannerism*, as a term of reproach. If an artist is not endowed with a ready and copious invention, he becomes mannered; because he is always repeating the same things

and ideas, while nature is infinite in her varieties and modifications. If his invention is not restrained by taste and judgment, he exaggerates and caricatures nature; and that is mannerism. If his mind is incapable of conceiving great and lofty ideas, he is apt to degrade and impoverish nature, — that also is mannerism. In short, every impropriety of form, expression, colouring, &c., whether it arises from excess or defect, is mannerism.

3. There is another kind of mannerism which produces the most lamentable results. When a pupil imitates the manner of his master, instead of nature, he imitates a defect: instead of following the genuine model, he follows an impaired copy at second-hand. Who would give the best description of a battle? — one who had been present in the action, or one who had received his account from the narrative of another? If on the manner of his master he

adds or engrafts his own peculiar one, there is defect upon defect, or nature at third-hand; — that must be mannerism.

4. This practice, without doubt, contributed materially to the decline of art in Italy, and militates much against its resurrection. It explains also why it is that the arts rarely flourish for long periods at a time. Pre-eminence is only gained by long and arduous study. As soon as a nation becomes possessed of a multitude of great works, the young artist, finding what he conceives a perfect model prepared to his hand, or perfect as far as human genius is supposed able to make it so, thinks that he may escape the preliminary toil and drudgery which the individual who produced it was compelled to undergo. He becomes an imperfect imitator. But hundreds are soon found able to imitate this model as well as himself, for to do so it only requires a certain degree of mechanical skill.

He must strike out something new, to catch the public and distinguish himself. Being deficient in real power, he has recourse to extravagance. For a time the novelty pleases,—the public run mad, and taste is corrupted. This palls at length, and there is a talk of going back to the early practice; but that practice has been neglected so long that its principles are lost: to acquire it, you must begin again from the fountain-head. This does not pay; so the artist restores the ancient practice by becoming a mere copyist. The galleries of Italy are filled with persons engaged in copying the works of the great masters. But such a custom can never even make a good copyist; for the defects of accident, and the blemishes of time, damp, and neglect, are more easily imitated than the beauties of the original.

5. Fortunately for us in this country, we have never had *a school*, at least not any worthy of

the name: we have therefore nothing to unlearn, but every thing to learn; and necessity is the mother of invention. It is this which encourages reflecting men to hope that our turn will come, and that we may be able to decorate the council chamber of the nation with productions of British art, in a manner which shall not be unworthy of the building it is proposed to adorn, or of the nation which is inclined to sanction the undertaking. It is thought that the country which has numbered amongst her sons poets, orators, historians, of the very first class could produce artists of a corresponding merit, if only an opportunity were afforded for the display of their talents. That opportunity the country has afforded; it remains for them to prove that they are equal to it. Much depends upon beginning at the right end; but those who are determined to deserve success will most probably command it.

GREEK IDEA OF BEAUTY.

1. The most perfect specimens of beauty, both in form and feature, are preserved to us in the works of the Greek sculptors: they were produced by adhering to general principles, established after a long course of observation and practice, which, when once admitted, were universally adopted. They embody, therefore, not the manner of any particular artist, but the practice of a school. It is of consequence to know what that practice was; not for the purpose of servile imitation, but as a guide to be consulted.

2. The profile of the best Greek busts or statues is formed by a line almost straight, but slightly curved in the direction of the nose and forehead. The deeper the indentation which separates the nose from the forehead, the less

pleasing is the profile: take the busts of Plato and Socrates as an instance.

3. The beauty of the eyebrows consists in the fineness and delicacy of the streak of hair: the thinner the line, and the gentler its curvature, the greater will be the calmness which the eye announces. The ancients, when they wished to express dark hair in sculpture, and consequently austerity, gave a certain cutting sharpness to the eyebrows, as in their Jupiters, Plutos, &c. In the deities characterised by light hair, such as Venus, Ganymede, Apollo, the eyebrows have no appearance of this sharpness of cut.

4. The hair in ancient sculpture is generally curly, except, of course, in portraits. In female heads, and especially those of young girls, it is drawn back, and fastened in a simple knot at the top of the head; but wavy and undulated, to produce a play of light and shade, and so demonstrate its abundance.

5. A squared nose, that is, not sharp, but full and broad in the bridge, is suitable to an open and serene brow.

6. A moderate fulness in the cheeks has the effect of dividing the forehead into more parts for the display of a greater volume of muscle.

7. The forehead is of very moderate height, such as would be called *low* by us, but in exact proportion with the other divisions of the face. This is entirely at variance with our notions, but not so with nature; for the forehead is lowest in the flower of youth, and grows higher and higher in appearance as we advance in years; so that a high and bare forehead is the attribute of age, but not of youth and beauty. The hair, too, takes a circular form round the temples, so as to form a perfect oval with the rest of the countenance; and not with two re-entering angles of bare skin at each side, which

lines disturb the harmony and destroy the regularity of the concave ones below.

8. The lower lip is rather fuller than the upper, in order to lead on more gracefully to the chin, the beauty of which consists in its rotundity, and not in the dimple, which is but an accident in that as well as in the cheeks.

9. The ancients gave a laughing air only to their Satyrs, for the purpose of expressing dissoluteness, intemperance, grossness, and folly.

10. They were scrupulous even in the different forms of the ear, which was shaped to a nicety.

11. Fine eyes were somewhat more curtailed in length amongst them, than in the works of the best Itarian artists; but they were large in size and shape, and exact in their encasements. The surrounding bones were not large nor prominent, in order not to broaden the face nor render it triangular.

12. In the male figure a chest superbly arched was esteemed a beauty. In the female it was narrower, with a gentle swell, and small but rather pointed breasts; and therefore their young girls used to sprinkle a certain powder of marble from the island of Naxos over the bosom to prevent its enlargement.

13. The beauty of a youthful hand amongst the Greeks consisted of a moderate fulness, with marks scarcely visible, like gentle shades, in the joints of the fingers. The fingers well tapered; and when they wished to form dimples in a full fleshy hand, they did not indicate the juncture, nor did they curve the last joint as the moderns do.

14. Their legs were fleshy, the shin bone and cartilages being scarcely visible; so that the knee makes a gentle and uniform swell from the thigh to the leg, not interrupted by ups and downs: this was their constant practice.

15. They did not compress the feet as we do, perhaps through the abuse of tight shoes. The less contracted the foot, the more beautiful is its form. Their nails, also, were made broader and flatter than ours.

16. The muscles are never exaggerated; they are always the most beautiful, and the best adapted to the subject, and to the simplicity of their forms and attitudes. The more of motion or contortion which is given to the traits or muscles, the more is the nobility of the figure degraded. A great man gesticulates little, and distorts himself still less. A single trait indicates his passions; but the exertion which he makes to restrain them, or regulate them according to the dictates of prudence, decorum, or justice, is at the same time seen struggling *within* him.

17. The attitudes of the gods are in conformity with their exalted dignity. There have

only been discovered two Greek divinities with their legs crossed, or their feet in an undignified position; and who knows why they were so represented?

PROPORTIONS

1. Proportions consist in the different dimensions of objects, compared with one another; or otherwise, in the accordance and suitableness of the parts in any one object, compared with themselves and with the whole. But the proportions of the fine arts are not those of geometry. They are not to be reduced to the measure of one given standard. They vary infinitely, not only in different objects, but also in objects of the same class; and those varieties are regulated solely by their suitableness to the expression and character which it is intended to portray.

2. The first variation in the proportions of the human body is not an exact division of those belonging to the age which succeeds. A boy is not a little man; for so he would be a dwarf, and not a boy. This is the defect in the children of Laocoon.

3. Again, the female sex has proportions of its own, as its forms are likewise different: lower stature, longer neck, chest narrower, shorter thighs, longer hips, smaller feet, and muscles less prominent; hence contours less decided, and motions more easy. All these vary according to their various conditions of girlhood youth, maturity, or old age.

DESIGN.

Design is the art of giving to each object its true measure and proportions, and of enclosing

the different forms by varied outlines, in order to determine the attitudes and expression of any kind of figure under any circumstances; — an immense study, since nature is infinitely diversified. To preserve in each figure an exact appearance of proportion in every variety of position, distance, and foreshortening; to vary these proportions according to the character of the objects; to maintain an equilibrium in every kind of situation or movement; to give preponderance where necessary, and finite motion to bodies no longer animated; to diversify the attitudes, and still preserve them always natural; to create contrast and opposition in the positions, the air of the heads, and deportment, yet without constraint; to outline with spirit and freedom; to express much by a few strokes, yet without dryness or harshness, nay, with grace and elegance, so that the flesh may appear soft and succulent, but of every consistency, from the pleasing

delicacy of youth down to the venerable and rougher appearance of age — from the feminine elasticity of Venus to the muscular fibre of Hercules, and even onward to the divinity of Apollo; all this is design, and all this is but a means.

GRACE.

Grace is nothing more than beauty itself; only more delicate, more sweet, more captivating. Hesiod says that Minerva sprung from the brain of Jupiter, the Graces from his heart. It arises from ease, flexibility, variety of movement, and a natural and easy passage from one motion to another. What a grace there is in children, resulting from their motions,—simple, frank, and agile! Their ingenuousness, cheerful humour, innocent curiosity, dislikes, complaints — even their very tears are susceptible of grace.

ELEGANCE.

A union of all the graces produces elegance. This supposes, on the one hand, exactness, pureness, and regularity; while, on the other, it demands freedom, frankness, and dignity; — all expressed with an air sufficiently natural to conceal the study and artifice of the artist, without transgressing the rules of correctness. A difficult combination; yet it is still more difficult to represent grand subjects with elegance, or simple ones without becoming trivial.

DRAPERY.

1. Man's chief beauty is in himself, and not in his habiliments. "They are only accessories, which serve him for use or ornament. But the

climate and habits of European nations no longer permit the person to be exposed; therefore the able artist will take care to dispose the drapery round his figures in a manner which indicates their principal lineaments, instead of lumping them on like a heap of clothes in a buck-basket, whilst he preserves the costume of the period in which his actors are supposed to live, and adapts them with propriety to the respective characters they are intended to represent. George the Third in the dress of a Roman consul, is quite as absurd as Achilles or Romulus in a frock-coat and top-boots.

2. The ancients, who were accustomed to see the naked figure in their public games, and the body considerably exposed even in domestic life, had none of those feelings of delicacy which influence us; their drapery therefore was commonly managed so as to conceal as little as possible the forms beneath it. For this purpose

it was generally wetted when placed upon the model, and is so represented in most of their statues as well as pictures. The effect thus produced is excellent when the robes are not too scanty. It shows better the principal parts of the body, and creates less confusion and more expression. If conducted with dryness or poverty, the longitudinal plaits will appear like so many cords, or like the flutings of a column. Moreover, the spaces between the plaits ought not to be all equal, nor the folds of the same quality. Their edges as well as interstices ought to be harmoniously varied; and the surface of each fold should never be so disposed as to produce an acute angle of light and shade: such a disposition destroys all repose. The examples of ancient drapery not wetted are very few.

3. The drapery assists materially in producing variety, not only in colouring, but in the

forms and lineaments, by a judicious distribution of the folds and plaits. The artist evinces his power when he has the skill to adjust them round the limbs with ease and simplicity, and yet preserve a character of lightness and grace. The dress, moreover, by its agitation, is of great service in helping to express the agitation produced by violent motion.

STYLE

1. Style has reference to the forms, proportions, and drapery; and is distinguished into three sorts, — the grand, the middle, and the little.

2. Every thing whatever is composed of parts; and these parts are again composed of smaller ones; and each of these smaller ones contains others still smaller than itself, and so

on *ad infinitum.* The face, for example, is composed of forehead, eyes, nose, and chin; these are the principal parts necessary to the formation of a face. Each of these is composed of smaller parts, certain bones, muscles, fibres, &c.; and each of these again of parts still more minute. Whoever should attempt to represent microscopically the pores and down of the skin, as some of the Dutch painters have done, would produce nothing but littleness; and every littleness displeases. It is a grand style which shows only the great and necessarily component parts of any object. That which is grand pleases us; it does not weary, and appears to exalt us; hence it ought to be studied in every part of a composition, inasmuch as the virtue of art consists in producing the greatest possible effect with the least possible work. This is an excellent maxim, of clear and universal importance; but too often neglected, not only in matters which

relate to our mere personal gratification, but also in those which are of higher import, such as medicine, jurisprudence, legislation. In the same manner as our artists forage every province of the arts, and crowd the mingled products into a single work, and so produce a chef-d'œuvre of absurdity, so our doctors string systems of remedies together, and reduce us to corpses; our lawyers give us perpetual motion, and reduce us to mendicity; and our legislators complicate the machinery of their laws, in order that we may never know what the law is.

3. All this selection of forms, proportions, attitudes, drapery, style, or whatever else, is merely a means tending to produce expression.

EXPRESSION.

1. Expression is in general the art of representing any object agreeably to its nature, and to the situation in which it is placed. Rocks, water, plants, animals, have their expression, and are said to be well expressed when their respective properties and constituent qualities are well represented. But in particular the expression of man, the object of most consequence to us men, is the art of representing with propriety his internal feelings by some sort of external indication.

2. Our machine is so constructed that it takes different appearances, and makes, as it were, a change of scene with every impulse or variety of feeling, agreeable or otherwise. If it be the artist's duty to know how to express these

changes, it is equally incumbent on the spectator that he should know how to distinguish them.

3. The head, for instance, which is the principal member affected by the play of the passions, bends forward in humility, shame, and sorrow; leans on one side in pity and languor; raises itself in arrogance, and fixes itself firm upright in obstinacy; makes a backward motion in surprise; and reiterates a rapid succession of movements in disdain, derision, anger, and indignation.

4. In like manner all the members of the body have their language: attitude and gesture supply the place of words, and give force to them. Agamemnon was present at the sacrifice of his daughter; but the artist, unable to portray the father's feelings on his countenance, represented him with his back turned away from the altar, and with his head veiled. That attitude says more than a thousand words.

5. Beauty of form is compatible with the most violent passion, the most intense expression. Seek an example in the Niobe, which will prove to you that it is not necessary to distort the features in order to render them expressive. Pure taste knows how to distinguish the accessory from the principal parts; and by the indication of accessories the most forcible expression may be bodied forth. There is the Laocoon! In this work we see the semblance of a man in years, but of undiminished strength, convulsed by the poison of the serpents, which are wreathed around and biting him. The spasm shoots through his whole body, even to the feet. Yet this is not all the pain he suffers: he partakes that of the two boys by his side, evidently his own children, and who look up to him for assistance. All his efforts, great as they are, to alleviate their pangs, prove fruitless;—he gives himself up to an impulse of anger and mental agony. Convex lines,

meeting with straight and concave ones, predominate in his figure, for the purpose of representing agitation; which is still more strongly expressed by the angular forms adopted, as well at the points where the muscles rise out of, as where they sink into the flesh, so as to render the violent tension of the nerves and tendons more evident. In this sublime agony, he still preserves so much dignity in his countenance, his body, and his actions, that, however horrible his endurance, he betrays no one act which is unseemly or unbecoming; so that he appears a being of high and exalted rank, who knows how such a person ought to suffer. He seems as if striving to concentrate round his heart all the force of mental energy, against the tortures which swell his muscles and contract his nerves so awfully. His breast scarcely heaves, his belly is drawn in, and his sides hollowed, — all exhibits an expression of contraction, suffocation, ex-

cessive torture, and uncommon magnanimity. The pain of the children, though of a different description, is bodied forth with great truth and feeling. It is a pain merely physical, and appropriate to their respective ages.

6. Every person must feel the energy of such expressiveness; but the scholar, the man of taste and education, feels it more. He sees before him the Laocoon of Virgil, the royal brother of Anchises, the priest of Apollo and of Neptune. Virgil makes him howl, and even roar like a bull sacrificed at the altar. But the mouth of this Laocoon is not wide open; it appears as if giving utterance to a deep-drawn sigh. The sculptor, then, was more of a philosopher than the poet. It seems as if Socrates had guided the hand which gave so noble an expression to mortal suffering.

7. The grandeur here is external, but like the sea, which, though convulsed by the wildest hur-

ricanes, preserves calmness in its depths, and is only agitated on its surface. A person of royal lineage and sacerdotal office ought to know how to bear the greatest afflictions with becoming dignity: hence the action of Laocoon is one of repose, which degenerates neither into indifference nor apathy. If he were all in contortion, disfiguring himself, and raving or roaring aloud, the expression would be natural; but ignoble, and not of exalted nature. Here it has reached the sublime; and who is there who would not wish himself able to endure as this Laocoon endures? All that raises us above ourselves, and gives us an energy of which we were not previously sensible, is sublime.

CHARACTER.

1. Every subject which is well expressed is said to be well characterised. Character results

from the individuality and quality of any object, which distinguish it from others of the same species.

2. There is no man without a character of some sort or other; even he who is believed to have none, and taken for a Proteus, has a character—that of having none, by which, in fact, he is distinguished from others.

3. The talent of discerning these individual traits forms one of the most important branches in the art of seeing and portraying. The head of Alexander, for instance, announces in a moment the mind ambitious of universal conquest. This is perceivable in the full round salient eye, full of fire and upturned; in the projection of the chin; in the mouth slightly opened; in the eyebrows, &c. In Athens there was a school established for the sole purpose of drawing and studying the physiognomy.

4. Characters display themselves more forcibly

when they are contrasted with one another; but this must be done without affectation. One ought likewise to be able to recognise at once the different character of each figure on the scene, as if he had himself been actually living and moving amongst them.

5. The most interesting characters are these of man under the influence of moral action. If they are well portrayed, they enable us to read his heart, to anticipate or divine his sentiments, and discover the motive of his actions. Characters are the portraits of the disposition; and the artist who knows how to manage and represent them well, affords us the means of investigating the secret qualities of others for our own personal advantage. We become wise with Marcus Aurelius, and prudent with Ulysses. This is the dominion which the artist exercises over the heart of the spectator. The personages we approve touch us more sensibly: those whom

we disapprove ought to excite in us a deeper aversion.

6. Now let us examine the picture of Christ disputing with the Doctors, in the National Gallery. Even the most unobservant distinguishes at once the dignity of attitude in the principal figure, — the calm, smooth, and open forehead; large and tranquil eyes, beaming with kindness and intelligence; the straight nose and even mouth, indicative of composure; the grand and simple forms, which give nobility and grace. It is objected that the age is too much advanced to be true to history; but the natives of the East attain to manhood at least two years before we do, and some are even more precocious than others. Besides, it is not an ordinary man, and therefore not ordinary nature, which has to be represented. Observe the beauty and delicacy of the hands, almost feminine, to denote extreme youth; full, and tapered so evenly that the forms

beneath the surface are only just apparent,—as smooth and even as the character of the being they belong to: their position is highly expressive, and perfectly consonant to nature. It is still a common practice in Italy, when people are disputing, to tick off the different heads of argument as they proceed upon the fingers of the left hand. Here the Christ has already reached the third point of his discourse, which the painter explains by this simple gesture; and that leads the spectator at once into the middle of the discussion, while it informs him of the precise moment at which the action commences. It tells us that the arguments have already advanced sufficiently to elicit the different developments of character depicted, and to account for the various passions exhibited on the canvass. On the right hand of Christ stands the leader of the opposition, whose haughtier figure and bolder features show that he is formed to be the chief of his companions.

His upraised hand and pointed finger indicate that he has made an exception, and arrested the argument, just as the Christ was proceeding to the head he is marking on his finger. The slight curl in the mouth, the wrinkled smile of the eye, the forehead high but contracted above, even the undecided gesture of the forefinger, all show that he has made an objection which his reason tells him is untenable, but which he feels will produce its effect upon his companions, though it does not meet the subject in dispute. Behind him is a man of maturer years and more judgment, but with less consequence of demeanour. He listens attentively: his reason seems to acknowledge on which side the truth prevails; but the contracted brow and stubborn lip proclaim that his opinion may be changed, but not his vote. The principal figure on the other side of the picture, who is the second in prominence and consequence amongst the doctors, is strongly contrasted with his op-

posite companion. He says nothing, and scarcely condescends to listen: but the muscular compression of the mouth; the under-lip projected in derision, as though it would triumph in his companion's argument; the elevation of the chin, and the hook of the nose which comes down to meet it; the wrinkled lines across the forehead; the small, nervous, and half-opened eye,—all betoken insolent pride, and ignorant prejudice. He seals his heart, as close as his mouth, against the possibility of conviction; he meets with a sneer the arguments which he cannot disprove; and requites mildness and humility by malice and malignity, veiled under an affectation of derision or disdain. All is in character. Observe the stiff neck; the head set back, and obstinately pressed into the back and shoulders. How characteristic! Observe, too, the hand,—its knotted joints, its very attitude crabbed and distorted, like the mind of its owner; whilst the fingers press

firmly on the very corners of the book, as though they would say, "Although this book contained only a portion of the truths which you say it does, my mind is closed against them, and they shall be closed to me." Behind this man stands the last of the disputants. His countenance betokens less of arrogance, but at the same time less of intellect, than the other three. He too, like the one opposed to him, listens attentively; but is differently affected by the discourse. His features generally possess a better character than the others, so the expression upon them is less offensive. He seems to think, "there really may be some truth in all this." But his intellect, like his passions, is not strong. He directs his glance to the countenance of his nearest companion, to discover what impression the argument has made upon him: he sees the hard insulting sneer set there, and determines to go with his party.

7. Every character is suitable to the artist's

purpose which is possessed of the three following qualities,—not trivial, decidedly marked, true and existent in nature. If it be arbitrary, mean, or so feeble as not to declare itself, it can have no effect upon us.

8. Every such character will gratify the observer, provided it is well and consistently portrayed. A king in anger should not fret and fume like an ordinary person; nor is the grief of a hero like that of a woman or a poltroon. The most perfect beauty, says Cicero, was not bestowed in an equal degree even upon all the divinities; each had his own, as each actor has his proper part.

9. The selection of that which is the most beautiful and most interesting will always be the most impressive; but this does not imply that homely scenes, domestic incidents, or light and festive subjects, are to be rigorously excluded from the arts. Man is born with an instinctive

want of recreation and amusement. It is only necessary that these subjects should not be treated in a vulgar manner. Like those in the higher walks, they must be selected with taste, and embellished with truth, so as to preserve their real character, and make them interesting instead of insipid. Such was the famous picture which represented the espousals of Alexander and Roxana, painted by Aetion, and exhibited at the Olympic games, where it gained so much applause that the president gave his daughter in marriage to the painter. It has been described by Lucian, imitated by Raphael in the Farnesina, and transferred into the Henriade.

SELECTION.

The impressions received by the two senses to which the fine arts exclusively apply them-

selves, are less strong than those of which the others are susceptible; yet they are more numerous, varied, and extensive, as well as more nearly allied to pure reason. The artist, therefore, should be aware that his exertions, in every composition whatever, are to be guided by this principle, — that the whole and each part of his work shall possess such an expression as is most likely to influence our sentiments and imagination; which effort can never be obtained without taste and intelligence. The work must present a selection of appropriate subjects appropriately expressed, if it is intended to reach our hearts and reason through the medium of the sight, and the delight which the vision is capable of procuring us. To gain this object the artist stands in need of exquisite taste; good sense; knowledge of manners, habits, and customs; talents properly applied; and a coup-d'œil true, penetrating and observant, — to direct him in the

choice of that which is generally pleasing and interesting.

MERIT.

1. Merit does not consist in a copious invention, nor in the multiplicity nor variety of the figures and groups;—these are but means, and whoever stops short at the means will never arrive at the end. The great, the final merit of a work of art, consists in the force and variety of the characters, well chosen and well expressed, and at the same time always instructive.

2. To be useful, to gratify and instruct at the same time, it is necessary that the arts should rely upon beautiful nature; and that beauty will always be in unison with the importance of the subject. But that Callicrates should engrave a verse of Homer, or even the entire

Iliad, upon a grain of millet, and should make an ivory car which might be hidden under a fly's wing; or that Myron should form a cow so natural as to seduce all the bulls in the pasture;—when they have done all this, they will have made nothing but trifling absurdities, astonishing only to the eyes, which an ivory-turner of India or China could do as well; and will have consumed in these their trifles perhaps more time and labour than would be required for the production of objects really useful, as well as ornamental or gratifying. Assuredly one who misses his path wastes more time and toil than he who pursues the straight road.

3. Whatever object the fine arts represent, its meaning ought to be immediately apparent—what the figure is doing, who it is, what it signifies, and what it says to us that is either eloquent or important. In the Laocoön, for instance, we see the most beautiful expression of

sublime sufferance. The Apollo presents an image of masculine beauty, combined with the most perfect endowments of the heart and head. The Venus embodies the beauties of the female sex, — their grace, their gentleness, their tenderness, their modesty.

4. Mankind has yet further need of virtue, of probity, and its synonyme, universal beneficence; and it is from this necessity that they extract the most glorious of their pleasures. The meaning, therefore, ought to be influential as well as intelligible. Look upon Marcus Aurelius! * If his single name forms an apology for humanity, what an ardour for the practice of virtue ought not his image to produce — there as it is up in the Capitol — in the performance of the brightest action monarchs can achieve, did they but rightly understand the real purport of their

* The equestrian statue of M. Aurelius on the Capitol at Rome.

calling? He is giving peace to his people in an attitude at once of majesty and simplicity. Look at that head of real character! It is the head of one all ardour for the performance of his duty, who has to support the heavy and immense load of creating his people's happiness. Even the mantle easily disposed expresses majesty. Alas! why are not the fine arts always employed on subjects so consoling? Why have they never become as influential as they ought? Because they have employed themselves upon the Neros and Caligulas, as well as the Trajans and Antonines; because they have ennobled and prostituted themselves alternately. Hence they are significant and insignificant, — by chance or by caprice.

All these are general principles, alike applicable to both branches of the arts; but painting, which has other advantages, and more variety,

than sculpture, is also subject to other laws,—those which relate to composition, chiaroscuro, and colouring.

COMPOSITION.

1. A single statue, even though naked, is in reality a composition; that is to say, it results from the art of combining together beautiful parts, selected from different quarters, in order to comprise a whole equally beautiful and instructive. Again, it is viewed all round, and not from a single point of sight; therefore a statue is said to be well composed when all its parts, the limbs and attitudes, are so arranged that it produces an agreeable effect from whatever point in the circumference you observe it. To succeed in this is no easy task. The disposition of the drapery, the pose of the figure

the adjustment of the limbs, may be symmetrical and beautiful in the front view, but form awkward angles, cutting lines, and unpleasant masses, when seen in any other position.

2. If the composition of a single subject be difficult, it is much more so when extended to groups, and still more in bas-reliefs; because the multiplicity of different objects ought not to form more than a single argument possessing variety in its parts, but unity in the expression.

3. Painting, on the other hand, requires a greater extension and more richness in all parts of the composition. The laws which ought to regulate it are, therefore, more numerous and less simple. They depend upon the felicity of invention and propriety of distribution.

4. All nature presents itself to the intelligence of the poet and painter; and it not only presents itself as it naturally is, but as it has been,

as it may, and as it can be. To unite the indefinite link of time and space to the present order and past vicissitude of events; to know all their causes, and make them operate on the mind agreeably to the laws of harmony and truth; to re-unite the broken fragments of the past, and anticipate the fecundity of the future; to give a palpable and sensible substance to that which exists not, and which perhaps never will exist but in the imaginary essence of things; — this, according to Marmontel, is called invention in poetry and painting.

5. But all is not probable which may be possible; nor is every thing interesting which may be true. Hence invention does not consist in launching out into those regions which are too remote, above our comprehension, or beyond the reach of our senses; but in combining with harmony and variety all that which is around, between, and within us.

6. A faithful and cold copy of what is ever under our eyes is not an offspring of the invention, which consists in discovering, developing, discerning, collecting, and combining that which remains unobserved by the generality of mankind, but which in the mean time serves to make up a whole possessing interest and originality, and formed by a combination of known and acknowledged qualities. It is not absolutely impossible that history, fable, or society, should present us with a picture exactly as it ought to be; but it is a phenomenon of the rarest occurrence. Even the most extraordinary accidents of real life are always defective or insignificant in some point or other. They require, therefore, that these defects should be supplied by art, that is, the invention of the artist.

7. On the other hand, inventing is not creating. Man creates nothing new; he only imitates what he sees; but he gives an appearance

of originality by the choice, variety, and freshness of his combinations. Thus the painter does not invent what is new, but he selects every thing which is most interesting in history, fable, or real life, and transfers that into his picture. His invention consists in this translation. Hence invention has reference to all the departments of art — the composition, distribution, expression, chiaroscuro, colouring, drapery, and accessories.

8. The rarest and most valuable accomplishment in the art of invention, is the knowing how to select. Nature presents herself with the same freedom to all men, and almost in the same colours to all eyes. But the mere seeing is nothing: every thing depends upon being able to discern; and the advantage which great minds possess over ordinary ones, is the capacity of selecting what best suits them with most judgment.

9. An interesting event being fixed upon, its

details have next to be compressed into one focus, and represented under one point of sight, in such a manner that all the parts concur in the same end, forming by their mutual correspondence a whole, which shall be simple and single. This constitutes unity in composition.

10. Unity supposes a scope, a single subject, towards which every thing tends, and is directed. The action, interest, time, place, manners, and design, are all subject to the laws of unity. Any violation of these annoys the reason, and so diminishes the effect of a picture. In the Transfiguration, the unity of time and place is not preserved. A boy and dwarf quarrelling for the possession of a parroquet at the Last Supper, destroys the unity of interest and manners.

11. The action is the conflict of causes which tend to produce any given fact, and of the obstacles which oppose it. A battle is a single event, although composed of a multitude of ob-

jects and different actions. The principal action is the result of all the particular ones employed as episodes or as incidents Such a connection ought to exist between the principal action and the episodes, that no single piece can be removed without injuring or destroying the whole machinery. The simpler the action, the more beautiful and interesting it will be. Simplicity prevents confusion. Who can be distinguished in a crowd?

12. As no figure ought to be in violent contortion, neither ought any one to have its action terminated; for so it would become cold and deathlike. When the step, gesture, or motion of any kind is concluded, the imagination of the observer is bounded with it; but when the act has yet to be terminated, we imagine other movements, and thus the figure seems alive.

13. A composition may be copious in figures, yet barren in ideas; but the reverse of this is next

to an impossibility, since it requires immense study as well as talent to vary the beauty as well as expression of every figure, while all of them are necessary to the tale, suitable to the subject, and productive of unity.

14. A certain neglect of finish is allowable at times, and in some parts of a composition, for the purpose of giving more prominence to the principal subject. But it requires skill to be negligent. To paint the face with the most elaborate care, and leave all the rest of the figure, the back-ground, and accessories, a daub, or in a mist, or indistinct, does not show skilful negligence, but inartist-like poverty.

15. It is not necessary that the expression should be centered in a single character: on the contrary, it ought to be distributed proportionally through all of them, from the principal one down to the least important; but it is absolutely requisite that it should be compressed into one

single point. The moment of supreme interest in the action is the moment to be selected, without any reference to what has preceded, or may be subsequent to it. This instant being once decided upon, all the rest is equally decided; every thing follows in its natural order, and takes up its appropriate place and part.

16. Every person possessed of common sense is capable of pronouncing an opinion upon the composition of a picture. If you are ignorant of the subject, go and learn it, if you recognise the story immediately, so much the better; consider then whether the most interesting moment of action is selected—whether all the concurrent incidents are of a nature most favourable for giving the history its greatest possible effect—and whether the characters are the most expressive and most suitable that can be. Every thing which is contrary to nature, truth, and unity, is a defect in the invention. A mixture

of any thing contradictory, obscure, or of doubtful meaning, is equally offensive, as the introduction of objects which are useless or foreign, or which distract the attention from the principal subject.

17. There is the Raising of Lazarus, by Sebastian del Piombo, in the National Gallery, a picture which contains all the best elements of composition. Let us try to understand it. The incidents of the story are as follows:—A Jewish family—of two sisters, Mary and Martha, and their brother Lazarus—enjoyed the friendship and love of Christ. The brother fell sick, and died. Four days after the burial it was announced that Jesus was approaching. He came to the grave, which was a cave, with a stone to close it, and said, "Take ye away that stone: Lazarus, come forth!"—and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus

saith unto them, "Loose him, and let him go!"—This is the moment at which the painter takes up the subject. Jesus and Lazarus form the prominent figures in the picture, as they were in the story. The finger of Jesus, pointed downwards, indicates the command to loosen the revived man; his right hand uplifted, with open palm, seems to appeal to the Power above, while it refers the spectators to the agency by which the miracle was performed. Lazarus is in his first amazement: his look towards Jesus is scarcely one of recognition, but of astonishment; whilst his hands at the same time eagerly assist in tearing off the bandages which confine him. Martha, with averted head and upraised hands, shows by her attitude and gestures that the sudden apparition of her brother is a fact too startling and too affecting for her powers of mind to bear with calmness. But Mary, the devout—all faith and gratitude—

is kneeling at the feet of Jesus, with an expression of holy and humble thankfulness. The sorrow of neither sister is yet turned into joy, but into devotional rapture or to awe. Peter also kneels at the feet of Christ. John, behind Christ, appeals mildly to the miracle against a disputatious Jew. Others of the spectators are amazed; some merely curious; some by their looks trying to doubt the fact, and already propounding their arguments to dispute it; whilst in the back ground, their proper place, are those mean, selfish, venerable men, who feel that a notable miracle has been done, which they dare not deny, though determined to *slander* its author, whom they cannot silence or refute, and whose progress they are unable to arrest. The women in the middle ground seem to be professional mourning women, similar to the *Præficæ* of the ancient Romans, who preserve their character of mourning in the spirit of profession, by continuing to

pursue their vocation when the necessity for it has already ceased.

18. That pleasing effect which we feel in beholding a multiplicity of objects at one glance, is produced by the order of their disposition being well digested, and not thrown confusedly together without consideration or discrimination. Every figure ought to be in the place adapted for it; the principal one most prominent, and the others at proper distances, to allow them the faculty of moving themselves with ease, as their circumstances require or their fancy wills, yet so as to be seen distinctly, and arranged with such skill one above the other that the imagination may supply the parts which are concealed. All ought to appear disposed without constraint; for then the eye of the spectator wanders over the picture, — reposes and dwells on it with satisfaction.

19. The arrangement of the figures, like every

other part of the composition, is to be made subservient to the expression, and therefore ought to vary according to the nature of the subject. In the Massacre of the Innocents, at the National Gallery, the figures are crowded together; interlaced in every variety of posture, their limbs and bodies crossing and recrossing each other throughout the whole picture. This expresses the confusion of the scene. The want of room shows that there is no room for moving, no chance of escape. Raphael was, indeed, a master of composition.

CHIAROSCURO.

1. The light which falls upon any object does not illuminate that object with the same degree of splendour or intenseness in every part; because the rays strike more vividly upon the parts which are near, than upon those which are further

removed from their source. Again: if an object is round, or has its sides inclined, the rays of light do not fall perpendicularly upon it; their strength is therefore diminished in proportion as their obliquity increases. If, on the other hand, the rays of light fall upon a body which is placed between them and any other, that other is thus shut out from receiving any of the direct rays at all. From these, and such like incidents observable in nature, results the science of chiaroscuro; which is the art of distributing lights and shades so as to relieve those parts which ought to be prominent, give rotundity to some, flatness to others, and again to others brightness and transparency. It is applicable to colours, as well as to subjects represented without them, that is, in black and white; to a picture as well as to an engraving, or a cartoon.

2. The light ought not to be introduced as if it came from a window, or through a hole, unless

the subject absolutely demands it: on the contrary, it ought to illuminate the whole picture in a broad mass, both directly and by its reflections, always bearing in mind that the intensity of the light or colours is to be properly harmonised.

3. Masses are those broad expanses of light without any shade at all, which are distributed in befitting and prominent parts. Shadows interrupt and cut the masses of light. When they are so arranged as not to produce a defect of this kind, the figures will be distinguishable, as they ought to be, even from a distance.

4. Now, as the object which is nearest to the light receives the strongest illumination, it follows that there is a constant degradation, according to the lesser or greater remoteness of the objects represented, from the greatest splendour down to the total privation of light altogether in those parts which the rays of the luminary cannot penetrate.

5. But darkness is always unpleasing. It is therefore obviated by reflections. These are of two kinds: the one a simple light refracted from hard and polished substances, such as glass, metal, marble, &c.; the other from bodies not polished: and these also reflect colour as well as light, which is always tinged with the tint of the object from which it comes. Hence a small quantity of light and a great number of reflections produce much that is grand, very little that is small, much that is illuminated, and nothing dazzling.

6. Raphael was ignorant of reflections, which conduce so much to clearness, variety, and beauty. In conjunction with all the Florentine school, he employed bright colours in the fore-ground, contrary to the practice of the painters of Lombardy and the best colourists, who made use of simple colours, red, yellow, and azure, which are more appropriate than white to bring objects close to the eye.

7. In the harmony of chiaroscuro, Correggio stands pre-eminent. He has never been rivalled, much less excelled.

COLOURING.

1. Colouring is the art of giving to each object the precise colour which becomes it, in order that the whole may produce a beautiful imitation of nature. All the effect which results from form acquires an additional force by means of colouring. If nature pleases us by her forms, she enchants us with her colours.

2. To understand the beauty of artificial colouring, it is first of all necessary to understand that of nature under her most favoured climates and in her most favoured productions; to compare, examine, and exercise the eye in what is beautiful, and all that is most perfectly so. One

who examines with attention, observes that the same objects appear beautiful in one point of view and not so in another; and he discovers that the difference arises either from the quality of the light which emanates from them, or from the manner in which they receive it. Too strong a light hurts the vision, too weak a one has no effect. The spot illuminated by the sun's rays, when those rays are tempered by the vapours of the atmosphere, produces a charming effect of colour; and the sombre features of shade become pleasing, when its obscurities are softened by the rays reflected from the azure vault of heaven. Hence two sorts of light may be employed in a picture — the one coming directly from the sun, but well-tempered; the other reflected from a cloudless sky, which sheds a varied and pleasing softness over the masses of shade.

3. In proportion as objects are distant, their colours gradually modify themselves, partaking

more and more the tones of the aërial tints, as they become more and more remote; and thus all bodies, and even the different colours themselves, when seen at a great distance, take the common colour of aërial perspective.

4. Nature employs but two metals, iron and copper, for colouring the whole creation. All her variety results from the varied combination of three principal colours: red, yellow, and azure. What a harmony there is in the rainbow! Take away but one of its principal colours, the red for instance, and the harmony is gone. The ancient painters for a long time employed only these primitive colours; the moderns make use of a considerable number. But with these three, and the addition of black and white, eight hundred and nineteen different combinations may be produced. Hence Apelles and Protogenes might have been as good colourists as Titian or Correggio.

5. Every object in painting will be well coloured when it possesses its real natural colouring. The white of woollen, linen, or flesh, are whites of different qualities, and each of them ought to be produced without crudeness, or without reminding one of the palette. These are the *local* colours, that is to say, the natural colours, which an object appears to possess according to the greater or lesser remoteness of the point from which it is beheld. Its distance is determined by the aërial perspective. Red, for example, is the local colour of that part of a picture where a dress of scarlet may be represented. But as colours are also produced by the reflections of light, which light is subject to a variety of changes, as well on account of its different degrees of intensity as from many other causes, it thence follows that there will be an equal variety of shades or tints in the same colour, which is called scarlet. If the sun shines strong or languidly upon it, hori-

zontally or perpendicularly — if it be not illuminated by the sun itself, but by the azure sky, or by one or more artificial lights — if the light falls directly upon it or obliquely, or shining through any other intermediate objects — or if this light comes from a distance or from the vicinity — from all these, and an infinity of other circumstances, will result many different shades of the single colour, all of which are indiscriminately called scarlet, because our language is deficient in appropriate terms to express every gradation. In painting, therefore, the local colour is that which naturally belongs to the object itself, but modified according to any of the above-mentioned circumstances; by which reflections, reverberations, mezzotints, mixed and imperfect colours, are produced.

6. There are certain objects — the sun for instance, fire, the diamond, gold, and polished bodies — which painting, with all its ingenuity

and daring, can never succeed in colouring with the same vividness as nature. In such cases the painter can only make an imperfect approach to the reality by bestowing upon other objects deeper or darker tones than those which nature gives them.

7. The human skin is the most difficult part of colouring, and of the most interest, for it is mankind which is to be painted. All other colours are but incidental, existing only in the surface of the object; but in those of the human race it would seem that nature intended to depict our very essence. The colour alone manifests one's course of life, age, personal character, different degrees of bodily power, and every inward working of the mind. But what sort of complexion is the most beautiful? It is vain to ask such a question of the African, the American, or the Chinese. Even in Europe inclinations differ respecting this point. The French used

to prefer a milky whiteness; and some nations of the north are captivated with a whiteness like alabaster. It is agreed, however, that man's complexion ought to be half a tint deeper than that of woman. A good colourist will give such tints as should belong to the various conditions and characters of his figures. The complexion of a princess will be fairer, more delicate, and more transparent than those of her attendants; and a country girl will have a browner skin and firmer flesh than the inhabitants of a city. A good complexion denotes the purity and moderate abundance of the blood, which enlivens every part of the body with a different tint, tinges the cheeks with a ruddy light, the lips with a pure vermilion, and makes the freshness of health apparent in every condition. Those images which have the appearance of being fed on roses and lilies, or alternately rouged or plastered with white paste, are not made of

flesh and blood, but are unnatural as well as affected.

8. The tone of a picture must accord with the subject and the general expression of the scene: it should be bright and cheerful in a festive subject, severe and powerful in a serious one, sombre and impressive to express melancholy, suffering, or sorrow. A faithful imitation is not confined to the imitation of nature exactly as she is, but in the appearance of doing so. A painting is, in truth, a falsehood; but you believe it, if the artist knows how to counterfeit so well that he seems to tell the truth.

9. The harmony of colouring results from the art of combining the local colours of all the particular objects which enter into the composition; and from this harmony is derived the unity of tone, the relief and rotundity of the figures. But to produce this accord effectually, the passage from a strong colour to one of a soft and gentle

tint must be made by the interposition of an intermediate one, which breaks the harshness of the edges; and therefore a colouring of good consistency must be laid on with a brush which moves freely and lightly across the canvass, and not by dabbing with the point, or passing and repassing over the same spot, as animals do to smooth down their fur by licking it with the tongue. This freedom it is which gives freshness and beauty to colouring; and this it is which explains the meaning of a very common expression—"So well painted that it appears natural, and so beautiful that it appears to be a painting."

CONCLUSION.

1. In conclusion, it is only necessary to repeat what has been already stated, that the sentiments here propounded are not the opinions of an

individual, but those of the most experienced persons who have given their attention to the subject, whether as practical artists or enlightened critics. They contain a summary of the general principles upon which the higher branches of art depend for their success — not drawn from fancy, but from a judicious observation of the practice pursued by the greatest artists, both ancient and modern; just as Aristotle and Horace deduced their canons of poetic criticism from the writings of the greatest poets who had preceded them.

2. If they seem to exact too much from the artist, or to fix a standard too high for human powers of attainment, do not discard them or deny their truth on that account; but remember that no one ever reaches the aim he has in view — he always falls short of his desires in some way or other; therefore the further in the distance he places his imaginary goal, the more

elevated the model he chooses for his imitation. the nearer will be the progress which he makes towards perfection. What an interval there is between the hard, dry, inanimate manner of the early Egyptian style, and the Apollos and Gladiators! And yet these statues, however admirable they may be, are not the most esteemed works of Greece; they are not the Olympian Jove hurling his thunders—not the Minerva, the soul of eloquence—not *the* Venus, &c. &c. We do not possess one of these chefs-d'œuvre amongst the relics that remain to us; and those we have appear to us excellent only because we have never seen any thing better. Perhaps these, our best specimens, are nothing more than copies by Greek or Roman artists, refitted in the age of decadence, and then tortured by modern restorations. He must be credulous indeed who allows himself to be imposed upon by the Greek names inscribed upon some of them, but in characters

very different from those in use during the best periods of Greek art.

3. If, on the other hand, these opinions seem to be at variance with the notions you have already preconceived, do not therefore reject them with petulance, nor in a hurry. Call to mind that they are acknowledged as truths by all who really understand such matters: reflect, before you reject; and consider that the united authorities of the great men who worked upon such principles must be of more value than the empty declamations of any number of ignorant pretenders. Accept them as true in the first instance; then test their truth at Hampton Court, in the National Gallery, or at the British Museum, and you will become convinced; and not only convinced, but you will find that you have made yourself master, not of details, but of principles— great and general principles — which will enable you to decide with confidence, — that confidence

which reason alone can give, upon the productions which your own countrymen submit to your inspection.

4. When you know and admit the principles which guide the artist, and would further understand the art of seeing, go and look upon nature and society under every aspect; examine, compare, select; and you will learn to understand the productions of the fine arts. A knowledge of the original will enable you to reap greater enjoyment in looking upon the improved copies, which are made with so much difficulty more beautiful than their model. In these copies you ought to observe the chosen beauties of nature united in various compositions, invented and disposed with taste and ingenuity; expressed all of them with correctness, grace, elegance, and propriety, as well in the drawing as in the colouring of all the principal and subordinate objects; all endowed with the character which befits their respective

conditions; and all tending to produce unity, whatever may be the assumption they are intended to illustrate — always and invariably unity, although diversified by the draperies, architecture, machinery, landscape and grounds; all working out an expression which may enchant the eye, by presenting a whole which is never seen so beautiful, or in such combinations, in real nature or society; and all for the purpose of feeding the mind with a knowledge of what is true and useful, and of touching the heart that it may be incited to virtue.

5. Even this is not sufficient. It is necessary to divest yourself of all prejudices or preconceptions, that you may not, like Ixion, mistake a cloud for Juno. Do not allow yourself to be imposed upon by the celebrity of names. A name makes nothing. Hamlet or Othello would give you equal pleasure if they had been anonymous publications. It would be well if all works

were anonymous: conceive that they are so; and create for yourself a just coup-d'œil by constant exercise, which will teach you how to discern the slightest variation in the forms, proportions, attitudes, accessories, characters, and expression. After all, a good copy is better than a bad original.

6. If the name of the artist is not allowed to influence your judgment, neither should you permit your reason to be enslaved by submitting it to the dictation of others. How seldom is it that a man's taste is formed upon his own observations! Most men see things, not in their own colours, but in those which others have ascribed to them; they see with other men's eyes. "Take your own sentiments for your guide," said the oracle to Cicero, "and not the opinion of the vulgar." When you meet with one who has the reputation of being a "connoisseur," whose knowledge is confined to the science of

terms, stories, anecdotes of the lives of artists, the vicissitudes which their works have undergone, their prices, their scarcity, and their celebrity — who sweeps his hand with a peculiar sort of air over some little spot in some great picture, or imitates with his fore-finger the motion of the brush, moving and circulating over the canvass as it would do in the hands of an able artist, while his eyebrows arch themselves to the skies at the mention of a name, — be sure that that man is an impostor: he may be a successful picture-dealer, but he is not an intelligent observer; nor should you take him for your guide with any greater confidence than you would choose to bestow upon a critic whose knowledge of genuine poetry was confined to the art of discerning the autograph of every author from a forgery.

7. Do not permit yourself to be deceived by show and glare, nor conceive that the work which makes the greatest impression upon you at the

first glance is therefore the best. This tells only at the Exhibition, where every thing is seen through a false medium, distracted as the eye must be by the bustle of company, the gaudy dresses, the glitter of frames upon the wall, and the chaos of colours. An artist tones his picture there for the express purpose of attracting attention, to make it prominent by casting its neighbour into shade. This is called "demolishing a rival." When Horace Walpole was asked to give his opinion upon a lady of brilliant wit and showy manners, the lioness of a party, who was applauded and flattered by all the circle round her, he only turned to his friend and said, "But what's the use of all this at home?"

8. Again: that which astonishes always diminishes in effect every fresh time you recur to it; whereas real worth is unassuming, is often overlooked at first, but gradually gains upon you, unfolds new beauties, or presents the same ones

in a still more pleasing aspect, as often as you revisit it. The Paradise Lost was sold for 10*l.*, and remained neglected for many years after its publication; but now we never tire with reading it; and the oftener read, the more it charms. Mademoiselle de Launay, afterwards Madame de Staël, who had a niece living with her possessed of considerable personal beauty, used to say, "The men come to see Sophia, but they stay to converse with me." We, too, go to see the pictures at the Exhibition. How many of them are there with which we should wish to stay and converse?

9. Finally: if you would have good artists and great works, never consent to accept the merits of execution for the intrinsic merits of a work. The value of a poem does not consist in hot-pressed paper and Baskerville types. If a painting has no merit beyond its beauty, it has failed of its end; if none but its colouring, it has

failed in its means. To be perfect, it must be a beautiful as well as a good painting: and it cannot be a good picture unless it improves and instructs at the same time that it pleases; for it is not the eye which discerneth beauty, but the intellect, as was said by Euripides more than two thousand years ago:—

Οὐ γὰρ ὀφθαλμὸς τὸ μορφὴν κρῖνόν ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ὁ νοῦς.

THE END.

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